1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

Geidam in the north, where another anthropologist, Abraham Rosman, and his wife were working. Discussions with Dr. and Mrs. Rosman helped all of us to see many of the unique features of Kanuri life that stemmed from our particular towns as against more general Kanuri patterns of behavior that were widespread throughout the society. We also became acutely aware of the kinds of variations that could occur across communities as they varied in size, ethnic composition, and quality of the political leadership. At the end of the first field trip, my wife and I spent three months in the capital city of Maiduguri looking at government reports and district notebooks, and acquainting ourselves with many of the special activities that characterize courtly life at the center of the emirate.

In 1964 and again in 1965 I returned to Bornu. On my previous visit the country had been a colonial holding of Great Britain, now it was part of the independent nation of Nigeria. My task in this second visit was to gather statistics on marriage and on divorce rates. But it also gave me a chance to see old friends, and catch up on what had been happening locally since my last visit seven years earlier. Some changes were readily apparent. A large number of deep wells were sunk all over the province, and these now provide enough water for a greatly expanded livestock population. Everywhere the cattle are healthier, fatter, and above all much more in evidence. They block roads and are seen herded in large numbers to and fro wherever one wanders over the countryside. Furthermore the people are less afflicted by parasites because the deep water is uncontaminated, as much of it was not during my first visit. There is now a large modern abattoir and a ground-nut oil refinery in the capital city, and in late 1964 the Nigerian railway finally pushed through to Maiduguri to connect the Bornu capital with Nigeria's national railway system. On the other hand, detailed questions about various traditional practices indicated that there have been few changes at the cultural and social level. At the political level where there were English District Officers and other officials of the regional government, now these posts are filled by Nigerians, generally from other parts of northern Nigeria. However it is for the most part correct to use the present tense in describing Bornu, and when this is not true I will attempt to mention the special circumstances that have brought on the changes.

Magumeri, our home for seventeen months in 1956 and 1957, sits on top of one of the ridges of Bornu, and there is a steep climb onto it from the motor road that travels along the bottom of the ridge for most of the year. During the rains, the road runs along the sandy top of the ridge, to keep clear of the large muddy areas formed at the ridge bottom. Magumeri includes approximately 2000 people about half of whom live in surrounding hamlets within the boundaries of the village area. It is a district capital and thus has a two-room primary school, a court house, and the large compound of the district head who administers twenty-one village areas, containing 50,000 people, living in an area of approximately 850 square miles. The village has a weekly market on Sunday, and is divided up into a number of wards under the village area head who is also the political leader of its surrounding hamlets and officially the political subordinate of the district head. Except for the fact that it has a somewhat lower proportion of non-Kanuri compared to most others, Magumeri is a "typical" Bornu village in terms of its size, occupational ranges of the population, and influences it receives from the capital and the world beyond the emirate. Indeed this is why I chose to spend most of my time

161 has been declining in the present century. The Kanuri Empire
[175] had suffered final defeat at the hands of Rabeh's invading forces in 1890, and the countryside had been ravaged in the
[164] succeeding decade. Venereal disease appears to have spread
[842] widely throughout the population leaving in its wake a marked decline in fertility and a resultant decrease in numbers of
311 the Kanuri population. There is consequently little pressure
[137] for land to farm. Large stretches of brush country are unworked, and the denser sections, along old water-courses, are
136 veritable jungles of brush and thorn. Larger wild-life have long since disappeared from Bornu, forced out by many centuries of human occupation, but some of the denser section of thicket might well support them today. A small herd of elephants is reported around Gumsa, in Geidam District, and of course elephants can be found in the extensive marshes along Lake Chad, but by and large the only game one sees are gazelle, monkeys, and birds, including occasional ostriches.

361 The Kanuri are a sedentary, agricultural people, who live in villages and towns. The fields which they farm encircle their villages. They are never found living in dispersed home-
369 steads. A basic division exists between Kanuri village life and Kanuri life in the towns and cities. This division corresponds to the classic distinctions between folk and urban polar extremes. Urban life was present in pre-contact Kanuri culture
[162] and consequently is well integrated into Kanuri culture. In fact, the Kanuri cities of the eighteenth century were unques-

[GEIDAM]

Table XIb

Cases of Children Given Away

Aristocracy	2:	to FaYoBr after weaning to FaElSi after weaning
Koranic Malams	1:	to MoMo after weaning
Canteen Traders	1:	to cousin after weaning
NA Malams	1:	to FaElBr (chibuna) after weaning
Kabuna	-	
Craftsmen	1:	to neighbor (chibuna) after weaning
Talaka	1:	to FaMo at age 4
Low-status	1:	to chibuna at age 11
	8	

median number of children= .75

mean number of children=1.33

nuri men in this sample have 57 living children. One hundred and eight children had been born to the group, but 51 of these have died. Because of the exceptionally high infant mortality rate, children are greatly desired and prized. In addition to malaria, which is the greatest killer of infants, an extremely high rate of venereal disease is present in Bornu, and a high percentage of those infected are sterile and unable to bear children. One factor in spreading venereal disease is the high divorce rate. Frequent divorce and remarriage spreads the disease throughout the population, and results in many sterile individuals who desperately want children. In their desire for children, they divorce and remarry, thus spreading the disease still further. In particular, if they marry a zogor they are

In particular, if they marry a zogor they are
586 less likely to have children than if they marry a kalə yaskə.
164 This probably accounts for the high birth rate among the Ko-
163 [142] ranic Malams (one has eight children; one has five); they
have all married kalə yaskəs, so that neither they or their
[562] wives are likely to be infected. On the other hand, in the
[463] lower categories (kabuna, craftsmen, talaka) a majority of
[634] the individuals have had no children at all. Seven of the
eight talaka have no living children. This is the group with
the highest divorce rate, and when they remarry they invari-
ably marry zogors (see Table VIII) so that the chances are
high that either husband or wife will be infected and sterile.
597 Table XIb reveals that eight of the 57 children who sur-
842 vived were given away, and grew up in the household of another
602 family. At first, this seems difficult to reconcile with the
great love for children and desire to have children. How-
ever, those who have borne a child have indicated their abil-
ity to bear others. Children are frequently given to relatives
who have no children of their own, and who are probably un-
able to bear children but want a child badly. It may be seen
that children are given away to siblings of the parent, to
the child's grandparent, or to the chibuna after whom the
child has been named. Six of the eight were given immediate-
ly after the child was weaned; two were given away at later
ages. Giving of children at later ages is related to frequent
divorce. Since the child belongs to the father, he may send
the child to his mother or father should he, the father, not
have an adequate home at the time.

241
433 est factors affecting crop fluctuations from year to year. The seven cases of loss in crop which resulted from inattention to farm work because of other activities, refer mainly to economic pursuits, especially retail and wholesale trade, which took the man away from his household during the growing season. The one exception to this rule was a man who had been to Maiduguri with his family in order to fight a court case.

The table on occupation and crop production reveals the pattern of crop production among the various groups in the community. The increases and decreases in production give some measure of the amount of variation that may be expected from year to year. What follows is a discussion of the factors that affect this variation.

• [164] The growing season is also a time of general biological in-
[136] crease in Bornu. The rain not only brings the blessing of fertility to the land, it also initiates a period of increased malaria, guinea worm and other plant and animal infestations, as well as the arrival of cattle nomads whose herds may stray into a cultivator's plots, and periodic hordes of locusts. These factors may at any time reduce a farmer's yield and add a constant element of uncertainty to his life. It is no wonder that prayers, charms, and divinatory practices are utilized in combination with the more "rational" agricultural techniques.

The amount of land under cultivation, and its location close to, or far away, from the settlement varies with the kind of primary occupational interest of the farm owner. This is easily seen in the table of average yields above, in which farmers and craftsmen have much larger yields than traders or religious and political specialists. These figures point up the fact that in Bornu a man's non-farming activities especially if they are in trade, politics or religion, tend to impinge